

Representative Fox, Senator Cole, and distinguished members of the Judiciary Committee,

My name is Michelle Peters and I'm here today to express my opposition to the abolition of the death penalty in Connecticut. I am fully aware of this committee's position regarding the death penalty. I am also fully aware of Governor Malloy's intent to abolish the death penalty.

*J. Edgar Hoover, late director of Federal Bureau of Investigations, asked the following questions: "Have you ever thought about how many criminals escape punishment, and yet, the victims never have a chance to do that? Are crime victims in the United States today the forgotten people of our time? Do they receive full measure of justice (as cited in Isenberg, 1977, p. 129?)*

Years later, we are still asking those questions. I am speaking today for those innocent victims whose lives were cut short and cannot be here and I'm speaking today because I am NOT a victim of a heinous crime or homicide and I'd like to keep it that way.

*The Death Penalty is and has been a standard whereby those who commit the most heinous, evil murders face the consequences of their actions by paying with their life. Each person on Death Row in CT is there due to his own choice, his own evil action. Put there by a jury of his own peers.*

I am asking you to consider the victims when voting on the Death Penalty.

A criminal on death row can watch T.V. go to school, even father children. They can essentially enjoy their lives for many years before they are executed. A criminal on Death Row has a chance to prepare his death, make a will, and make his last statements, etc. Some victims can never do that.

Victims are innocent and rely on the law to protect them. If these laws are not strong enough to repel and yes DETER the criminal intent, then we are not adequately protecting our victims or the public. A murderer strips the power from the victim and the only way to repel the power that those criminals take is to uphold a law that takes that power from the murder, and gives back the voice to the victim. I recently had the privilege of meeting a remarkable woman who was the victim of a violent crime. She was held against her will for hours, tortured, threatened with death verbally and physically. She knew this man: he was her father and only years later, as she sat with him as he died of cancer did he confess the reason he never killed: he was afraid of being caught and sentenced to death. Today I am asking you NOT to abolish the Death Penalty in CT because it is currently operating under a flawed and laborious process but instead to focus on streamlining and fixing it—so it can do what it was intended to do: serve justice for certain heinous murders, something that no other penalty can do. It is the only voice our victims have.